

Kunjen language

Kunjen, or **Uw**, is a Paman language spoken on the Cape York Peninsula of Queensland, Australia, by the Uw Oygangand people, Olkola, and related peoples. It is closely related to Kuuk Thaayorre, and perhaps Kuuk Yak.

Two of its dialects, **Uw Olkola** (Olgolo) and **Uw Oygangand** (Koko Wanggara), are very close, being mutually intelligible and sharing 97% of their core vocabulary.^[3] Another two, **Ogh-Undjan** and **Kawarrangg**, are also close, but somewhat more distant from the first pair. Kokinj (Kokiny) is a subdialect of Ogh-Undjan. A fifth variety, **Athima**, is poorly attested.

Below is a table showing the mutual intelligibility in vocabulary between the Kunjen dialects, based on a list of 100 basic words.^[4]

Uw Oygangand	97%	44%	38%
Uw Olkola		43%	38%
Ogh-Undjan			82%
Kawarrangg			

A small dictionary of Kunjen has been compiled by Philip Hamilton.^[5] A great majority of words begin with a vowel (>96%), similar to the situation in distantly-related Arrernte. Exceptions include kinship terms and loanwords. Syllable onsets are thought to be present in all languages, so their absence in native lexicon is highly notable.

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Respect register

As in many other Australian languages, such as Dyirbal, Kunjen also has a respect register, which is a polite way of speaking with a potential mother-in-law and is called *Olkel-Ilmbanhthi*. Most of the vocabulary is replaced, while affixes and function words are kept.^[6]

The sentence below is in normal Uw Oygangand:

Kunjen	
Uw	
Native to	Australia
Region	Cape York Peninsula, Queensland
Ethnicity	Ngundjan (Ogh-Undjan), Uw Oygangand, Olkola
Native speakers	2 (2005) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Pama–Nyungan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Paman<ul style="list-style-type: none">Southwestern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Upper<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kunjen</div>
Dialects	Uw Oygangand <div>Uw Olkola</div> Ogh-Undjan <div>Kawarrang</div> Athina
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Either: <div>kjn – Oygangand</div> olk – Olkol
Glottolog	kunj1248 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/kunj1248) ^[2]
AIATSIS ^[1]	Y83 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y83) Kun (cover term), Y188 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y188) Kokiny, Y237 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y237) <i>A</i>

Alka-nhdh idu-rr ay
spear-^{INSTR} spear-^{PST} I
"I speared it with a spear"

The equivalent in *Olkel-Ilmbanhthi* is:

Udnga-nhdh yanganyunya-rr ay
spear-^{INSTR} spear-^{PST} I
"I speared it with a spear"

Phonology

Vowels

Kunjen has 5 vowels:

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Back</u>
	<u>Unrounded</u>	<u>Rounded</u>
<u>Close</u>	i	u
<u>Mid</u>	e	o
<u>Open</u>	a	

There is a lexical vowel harmony constraint in Kunjen: Close and mid vowels do not co-occur in a word.

Consonants

Kunjen has 27 consonants:

		<u>Peripheral</u>		<u>Laminal</u>		<u>Apical</u>	
		<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Dental</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Retroflex</u>
<u>Plosive</u>	<u>voiceless</u>	p /p/	k /k/	ch /c/	th /t̪/	t /t/	
	<u>Voiced</u>	b /b/	g /g/	j /j/	dh /d̪/	d /d/	
<u>Nasal</u>	<u>Plain</u>	m /m/	ng /ŋ/	ny /ɲ/	nh /ɳ/	n /n/	
	<u>Prestopped</u>	bm /ᵐb/	gng /ᵑŋ/	jny /ɟɲ/	dnh /ɽɳ/	dn /ɽn/	
<u>Trill</u>						rr /r/	
<u>Approximant</u>	<u>Central</u>	w /w/		y /j/			r /ɻ/
	<u>Lateral</u>			ly /ɭ/	lh /ɭ̥/	l /l/	

In popular culture

The Uw Olkola word for the freshwater crocodile, *ogakor*, was used as the name of a tribe on the second season of the American reality television series, Survivor in 2001.^[7]

References

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